

## Should Youth be Working this Late or this Long?

Child labor laws protect youth under the age of 16 from working too long, too late, or too early. This table shows the hours youth may work in agriculture.

### Work Hours for Youth Ages 14-15

#### Work Hours

- Not before 7 a.m. or after 7p.m. during the school year
- Not during the school hours
- 7 a.m. – 9 p.m. during the summer

#### Maximum Hours When School is in Session – (Labor Day to June 1)

28 hours a week, but not over:

- 3 hours a day on school days
- 8 hours a day Saturday-Sunday and holidays or other non-school days
- 6 days per week

#### Maximum Hours When School is NOT in Session – (June 1 to Labor Day)

- 40 hours a week
- 8 hours per day
- 6 days per week

*NOTE: Federal child labor laws differ in many ways. Please be sure to check with the U.S. Department of Labor to learn the differences.*

### Employees have the right to speak up!

It is illegal for an employer to fire or punish an employee for reporting a workplace safety or health problem.

## What if You Need More Help?

Contact one of these government agencies:

Missouri Division of Labor Standards - to get employee/employer information:

573-751-3403

Fax: 573-751-3721

[www.dolir.mo.gov/lr](http://www.dolir.mo.gov/lr)

E-mail: [laborstandards@dolir.mo.gov](mailto:laborstandards@dolir.mo.gov)

OSHA—to get information or to make a complaint about health and safety:

800-392-7743—St. Louis

800-892-2674—Kansas City

[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

Missouri Commission on Human Rights—to get information or to make a complaint about sexual harassment or discrimination:

573-751-3325

[www.dolir.mo.gov/hr](http://www.dolir.mo.gov/hr)

U.S. Department of Labor—Wage and Hour

Kansas City – 913-551-5721

St. Louis – 314-539-2706

Toll Free – 866-487-9243

[www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

U.C. Berkeley's Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) for health and safety information and advice:

[www.youngworkers.org](http://www.youngworkers.org)

[www.lohp.org](http://www.lohp.org)

If you are an employee:

- Talk to your boss, parents, or teachers about the problem.
- Talk to a work experience coordinator or a counselor at your school.

*Information for this brochure was provided by the Labor Occupational Health Program, University of California, Berkeley.*

#### RELAY MISSOURI SERVICE:

Voice user Calling a Hearing/Speech Impaired User 1-800-735-2466 (voice)

Hearing/Speech Impaired User Calling a Voice User 1-800-735-2966 (TDD)

# Working Youth in Agriculture



## A Guide to Safe and Responsible Practices for the Employment of Youth in Agriculture



Missouri Department of Labor and  
Industrial Relations

DIVISION OF LABOR STANDARDS

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## Do Youth Get Hurt or Sick on the Job?

Every year, over 100 youth die from agricultural work injuries in the United States. Another 2,000 get hurt badly enough that they stay home from work. Almost 3,000 young Missouri workers are injured seriously enough to file a workers' compensation claim. 38% of these injuries are in agriculture. Youth working in agriculture are injured at a rate almost five times that of other injuries.

Why do injuries like these occur? Young workers are often injured on the job due to unsafe conditions. Also, they may not receive adequate safety training and supervision. Almost 80% of all workplace injuries to youth occur because they were not properly supervised. 50% occur because they have not received proper training.

## What Rights do Youth Have on the Job?

All agricultural workers have legal rights regardless of their immigration status.

You may wish to contact::

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to report any safety and health problems or about the right to refuse unsafe work.
- Missouri Commission on Human Rights for problems with discrimination or sexual harassment.
- U.S. Department of Labor about payment of minimum wage.
- National Labor Relations Board about joining a union.

## How Old Do Youth Have to be to Work?

In Missouri, you must be at least 14 years of age to be hired as a farm worker. Certain exceptions are allowed for 12 and 13 year olds only in non-prohibited occupations.

## Is It OK for Youth to do Any Kind of Farm Work?

NO! There are restrictions regarding the type of work youth under the age of 16 can and cannot do. See complete Missouri's list of hazardous occupations (294.040 RSMo) on our web site or call us for a copy.

If personal protective equipment (PPE) is necessary to keep you safe on the job, the work may be too hazardous for you. Please call us to see if you should or should not do that kind of work.

In Missouri, no worker under 16 may:

- Handle or apply pesticides.
- Drive, ride, or assist in operating a tractor or forklift.
- Drive any vehicle for transporting passengers.
- Use any power-driven equipment such as a chainsaw, hay mower, hay baler, or cotton picker.
- Work from a ladder or scaffold.



## Is the Hiring of Youth Good Business?

Young people are ready to learn and anxious to obtain work experience. Capitalizing on their assets and reducing problems in the employment of young workers is a challenge to each of us. Work habits that young people learn in their early years may last a lifetime.

## Do Youth Need a Work Certificate?

Yes! Under Missouri law, if you are under 16 and plan to work during the school year, you must get a work certificate from the public school district office in the area in which you reside.

## How Can an Employee Stay Safe on the Job?

To work safely you should:

- Follow all safety rules and instructions.
- Wear clean clothing daily.
- Never eat or drink in the fields.
- Never drink irrigation water.
- Know what to do in case of an emergency.
- Report any health and safety hazard to your supervisor.
- Stay out of fields where pesticides have recently been sprayed.
- Take breaks if overheated, drink plenty of clean water, and wear appropriate clothing to avoid heat stress.
- Use correct bending, lifting, reaching and pulling procedures when hand harvesting to avoid strains and sprains.